(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The proposal to allow foreign airlines to invest in domestic airlines is at a preliminarily stage.

Proposal for Air Kerala

128. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal to operate a Budget Airline 'Air Kerala'.

(b) if so, what are the conditions pertaining to the operation of international flights;

(c) whether Government would consider relaxing the condition considering the ownership as the State Government; and

(d) the response of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Though no proposal for formation of any airline by the name 'Air Kerala' is pending with the Government for clearance, the Government of Kerala had informed that a public limited company, 'Air Kerala International Services Limited' has been registered as a Special Purpose Vehicle for a budget airline project. Government of Kerala requested this Ministry for exemption to the proposed airline from the stipulated conditions relating to fleet size and the length of operation in the domestic sector for an airline to be considered for international operations. This request was not considered in the light of the existing Government Policy regarding the minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft and experience of 5 years continuous operations in domestic sector for permitting an Indian scheduled carrier to operate international services.

Implementation of APIS

129. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has proposed to implement an Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) making it mandatory for carriers flying into the country to transmit key passenger information including the background of the passenger before their flight take off for Indian destination;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether some international carriers have expressed reservation about his Ministry's requirement of the format in which the data is to be transmitted and have asked to re-examine the proposal; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Ministry of Civil Aviation has introduced the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS) at

6 international airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Cochin with effect from 1.4.2008. Under APIS all international airlines flying into India, are required to provide passenger particulars electronically in the prescribed format within fifteen minutes of their take off from the origin airport outside India, to the immigration authorities at the six designated airports. All the 76 international airlines operating at the six designated destination airports in the country have become APIS complaint. APIS has effectively reduced immigration clearance time and enhanced the security screening of passengers.

Cases of luggage theft at Delhi airport

130. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of cases of theft of luggage of travellers and involvement of unscrupulous staff members of airlines or ground handling agencies at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi (IGIA) came to the notice of Government;

(b) if so, the details of such cases reported during the last three months;

(c) whether Government has taken any concrete steps to check such theft cases at various airports; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) 7 cases of luggage theft have been registered during last three months.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Instructions have been issued to all concerned that all personnel working with Ground Handling Agents shall be searched by airport security personnel at the Gates while leaving airport. Also surveillance is kept by CISF manually and through CCTV cameras at all major airports. Installation of CCTV is under process at other airports. Airlines and different agencies operating at Airports have been briefed to get police verification report of their employees. However, private scheduled airlines have taken following steps to curb the baggage theft cases:

* All loaders are frisked thoroughly before and after the loading.
* Enhanced vigilance at airports.
* Loading/unloading of checked-in baggage under supervision of security/Airports services staff.
* Automated Baggage Reconciliation System at metro airports to reduce instances of such mishandlings.
* Extensive training imparted to ramp staff (especially loaders) on baggage handling.
* Establishment of dedicated baggage handling units at Metro Airports.
* Tally sheet implemented for each flight by some airlines which is handled by well trained staff.